

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1407

By Yager

A RESOLUTION to recognize and honor Clara Curd Hall Hughes on the celebration of her 101st birthday.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly pay tribute to those citizens who are celebrating special occasions in their estimable lives; and

WHEREAS, Clara Curd Hall Hughes recently celebrated her 101st birthday, a milestone that was commemorated as yet another precious souvenir of life's rich pageant; and

WHEREAS, a resident of Knoxville, Ms. Hughes, affectionately known as "Mother Clara," was the first African-American woman to serve on the union board for workers at the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge; and

WHEREAS, Clara Hughes has been a hard worker all her life, beginning on her family's farm in East Tennessee; when she was seventeen in Oliver Springs, she made a living for herself mainly through domestic work—cooking and cleaning in homes and businesses; and

WHEREAS, in 1942, when Oak Ridge was established as the production site for World War II's Manhattan Project, engineers were tasked with quickly building a town to accommodate 30,000 workers and constructing enormously complex plants, and many of those living nearby joined the effort, including Ms. Hughes; and

WHEREAS, Black people were initially prohibited from living in Oak Ridge, and though they experienced segregation, unequal pay, and housing woes, thousands of Black labor workers came to work in Oak Ridge, as the fifty-eight cents an hour paid was higher than they could make anywhere else; and

WHEREAS, in 1951, Clara Hughes began working as a custodian at an electromagnetic plant known as Y-12, operated for the Atomic Energy Commission by Union Carbide

Corporation; after success with her hands-on work, she was promoted to maintenance supervisor, a position she held for more than thirty years; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, Ms. Hughes earned a spot as a Y-12 union workers' board member, thus becoming the first African-American woman to serve on the board, an honor of which she is most proud and a gem in the crown of her legacy; she retired from Y-12 in 1982 after more than thirty years of dedicated service; and

WHEREAS, a woman of abiding faith, Clara Hughes was baptized as a teenager and has been a member of Little Leaf Baptist Church for more than eight decades; to this day, she never misses Sunday service; and

WHEREAS, throughout her life, she has been blessed with the love of family, including her first husband, Freeman Alfred Hall, a coal miner whom she married in 1937; her daughter Rosa, whom she and Mr. Hall adopted in 1962; and her second husband, Franklin Ira Hughes, whom she married after Mr. Hall's passing; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Hughes has many passions, including listening to gospel music, birdwatching, canning fresh fruits and vegetables, making jellies and preserves, playing checkers, and indulging in her favorite pound cake, made from a recipe that has been passed down through her family; and

WHEREAS, over the last century, she has experienced an important swath of American history, from the oppression of Jim Crow laws and the valor of the Civil Rights Movement, to which she contributed in her own ways, to the triumph of the first African-American president; and

WHEREAS, Clara Hughes is the treasured matriarch of her family and a beloved friend and neighbor to all who are blessed to know her; and

WHEREAS, we wish to grasp this golden opportunity to specially recognize one of Tennessee's most outstanding citizens on this very special occasion; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we recognize and honor Clara Curd Hall Hughes on the celebration of her 101st birthday and extend to her our best wishes for many happy returns of the day.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.